

Message Text

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FOR ATHERTON FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS: MASS JO US
SUBJECT: AIR DEFENSE FOR JORDAN:HAWK MISSILES

1. WE NOTICE FROM PRESS REPORTS THERE THAT SENATOR CASE
AND HIS STAFF SEEM TO BE EMPHASIZING NOT ONLY THE
SIZE OF THE HAWK SALE BUT ALSO THE QUESTION OF
HAWK MOBILITY.

2. ON THE SIZE OF THE SALE, WHICH IS ALSO DIRECTLY
TIED INTO THE MOBILITY ISSUE, JORDANIANS HAVE TALKED
WITH US ONLY OF A CONCEPT WHICH INVOLVED THEIR USE
IN THREE ROLES-AREA DEFENSE OF THE AMMAN-ZARQA
COMPLEX, DEFENSE OF AIR BASES, AND DEFENSE OF RADAR
THESE SEEM TO BE PARAMOUNT EITHER IN OFFENSE OR DEFENSE.
INSTALLATION. WE DO NOT HAVE A FULL FIX ON HOW
MANY BATTERIES WOULD BE DEVOTED TO,
EACH MISSION. HOWEVER, WE DO NOT CONSIDER 14 AS EXHORBITANT ON
BASIS AIR DEFENSE STUDY PROVIDING GOJ CAN DEVELOP FUNDING.
THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT THE
JORDANIANS ENVISAGE THESE MISSILES IN STATIC
DEPLOYMENT. WHILE THE SYSTEM IS MOBILE THEY WILL
RELY FOR DEFENSE OF THEIR FILD DIVISIONS ON VULCAN
AND REDEYE. THIS ROLE IS THEREFORE A STATUS DEFENSIVE

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ONE RATHER THAN ONE TIED TO HIGH MOBILITY OF FORWARD

DEFENSE OF GROUND TROOPS WHICH MIGHT AS SOME US
OBSERVERS CLAIM BE USED TO ATTACK ISRAELIS. ALSO FULL CAPACITY
IS NOT LIKELY TO DEVELOP AT THE EARLIEST BEFORE 3-4 YEARS.

3. THE STATIC DEPLOYMENT OF THESE HAWK UNITS, HOWEVER MOBILE
THEY MAY BE IN THEORY, IS REINFORCED BY FACT
THAT WE ANTICIPATE PRIMARY RELIANCE IN JORDAN WILL BE PLACED ON
COMMUNICATIONS BY COAXIAL CABLE FOR COMMAND
AND CONTROL PURPOSES. WHILE THERE WILL BE ALSO
RADIO COMMUNICATIONS THE COAXIAL CABLE LOOP WOULD
INHIBIT RAPID AND HEAVILY MOBILE DEPLOYMENT OF THESE SYSTEMS.

4. WE RECOGNIZE THAT THESE ARGUMENTS COULD NOT BE USED IN
OPEN TESTIMONY HOWEVER WE BELIEVE IN PRIVATE AND
PRODUCTIVE CONVERSATIONS WITH KEY CONGRESSIONAL
LEADERS THEY MAY HAVE SOME FORCE.

5. WITH RESPECT TO OTHER ARGUMENTS WHICH HAS
BEEN USED ABOUT REDEYE THAT THOSE MISSILES MAY WELL FIND
THEIR
WAY INTO TERRORISTS' HANDS WE CAN ONLY STATE THAT
THE JORDANIANS PERHAPS SECOND ONLY TO THE ISRAELIS
ARE CONCERNED ABOUT SUCH AN EVENTUALITY. THEY ARE
PREPARED TO IMPLEMENT STRICT SECURITY CONTROLS
PERHAPS ALSO WELL BEYOND WHAT IS REQUIRED IN THE
US LATTER OF OFFER WHICH ALSO STIPULATED SUCH
CONTROLS.

6. I DISCUSSED THIS WITH THE KING BRIEFLY YESTERDAY
AND HE AGAIN REAFFIRMED FIRST THAT IT WOULD BE
LUDICROUS FOR JORDAN TO ATTACK ISRAEL THEY WOULD
BE BADLY BEATEN UNDER ANY CONDITIONS FORESEEABLE
WITH OR WITHOUT THE AIR DEFENSE THE US IS PREPARING
TO PROVIDE. SECONDLY HE SAID THE FEDAYEEN ALREADY
HAVE ENOUGH SA-7'S TO BE A SERIOUS MEANACE BUT HE
WOULD TAKE EVERY NECESSARY SAFEGUARD TO INSURE
THAT REDEYE DOES NOT FALL INTO THEIR HANDS. I DO
NOT NEED TO REMIND YOU THAT HE OF COURSE WOULD BE
THE PRIMARY TARGET, GIVEN HIS HIGH VISIBILITY
AND HIS PENCHANT FOR FREQUENT FLIGHTS BY HELICOPTERS
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AND FIXED-WING AIRCRAFT.
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